

# MRSA Reduction (Decolonisation) Treatment

**This information leaflet is for patients, relatives and carers. It explains what MRSA is, how it affects us, how it spreads and what we can do to stop it spreading. If you have any further questions or concerns, please speak to the staff member in charge of your care.**

## What is MRSA?

MRSA stands for Methicillin (M) Resistant (R) Staphylococcus (S) Aureus (A). It is a type of bacteria that lives on the human body. For more information about MRSA please see the separate information sheet on 'pre-operative screening for MRSA' or the information sheet that has already been sent to you in the post.

## What is MRSA Reduction (Decolonisation)?

It is a programme of treatment to try to reduce the amount of MRSA living on your skin or in your nose. If we can reduce the amount of MRSA on your skin or in your nose you will be less likely to get a harmful MRSA infection or get MRSA in your surgical wound if you are having an operation.

## What should I do?

In most cases you will follow a **five-day treatment** programme that reduces the amount of MRSA living on your skin or nose. For those patients who are about to have surgery **this is essential because your surgery may be delayed if you do not complete the treatment.**

If you have received this treatment before, you should still complete it again prior to your surgery. You do not need to stay in hospital during this period. When you do come into hospital it will be harder for the bacteria (germs) to cause infection or spread to others.

You should aim to start the treatment no more than five days before your surgery.

The planned surgery should take place after the fifth day of treatment. If you have less than **five days before** your surgery, start the programme as soon as possible and continue until the programme is completed.

You do not need to be tested for MRSA again before admission or before your surgery. However, **if your surgery is delayed for more than seven days, you must start the programme again.**

**Even if you are not having surgery, we still recommend that you have MRSA decolonisation treatment as it will lessen the chance of you getting a harmful infection with MRSA in the future.**

### **Reducing MRSA on your skin**

We have sent or given you a five day course of antiseptic skin products that can be used to reduce the MRSA. The products are:

- A body wash / shampoo which contains an antiseptic called **chlorhexidine**. It is quite gentle on the skin and can be used by people with sensitive skin. If you are allergic to chlorhexidine we will give / send to you **Octenisan®** to use in the same way.
- One of the following nasal ointments, for putting inside your nostrils:
  - **Bactroban®**, which contains the antibiotic mupirocin or
  - **Prontoderm®**, which contains the antibiotic polyhexanide or
  - **Naseptin®**, which contains the antibiotic Neomycin and disinfectant Chlorhexidine.

The type of ointment we give to you will depend on any allergies you have and whether the MRSA we have found is resistant to mupirocin or neomycin.

**Please do not use Naseptin if you are allergic to peanuts.**

### **How do I use these treatments?**

It is very important that you carefully follow the instructions below. It may seem like a lot of work but the success of the MRSA treatment programme will depend on it.

- **Nose**

MRSA can be found inside the nose so you need to use **mupirocin (Bactroban®)** or **Prontoderm®** or **Naseptin®** nasal ointment. Place a small amount (about the size of a match stick head) on your little finger and apply to the inside of your nose. You can also use a cotton wool bud if needed. Then, press the sides of the nose together – this will help to spread the ointment in the nose.

For **Mupirocin or Prontoderm®** this needs to be repeated **three** times a day for **five** days.

For **Naseptin®** treatment must be used **four** times a day for duration of **ten** days. If you are having surgery, this ten day treatment should ideally be completed immediately before your operation, if this is not possible continue with the treatment after your operation.

- **Skin**

You will need to wash all over your body everyday with **chlorhexidine skin cleanser** or **Octenisan®** for **five** days. You need to apply it to your skin with a face cloth or your hands and then rinse it off. If you are having a bath, do not add **chlorhexidine skin cleanser / Octenisan®** to the bath water – this makes it too dilute to be effective.

You should put the liquid directly onto wet skin and use it in the same way as you would use soap. Begin with the face and work downwards. You need to pay particular attention to the areas around the nose, armpits and groin. If you are using **Octenisan®**, do not wash it off for **three** minutes.

If you have an open or infected wound, it will need to be covered with a dressing. The nursing staff will advise you.

- **Hair**

You will need to wash your hair with **chlorhexidine skin cleanser** or **Octenisan®** on day one, three and five of the treatment period. This should be put straight onto wet hair, like shampoo, and not diluted. If you are using **Octenisan®** leave it on your hair for at least three minutes. You can use your own shampoo and conditioner afterwards if you wish.

Hair extensions will also have to be washed. Beading should be removed if possible. Head scarves will have to be changed and laundered. Wigs should not be worn during treatment unless they can be laundered.

- **Bed linen and towels**

Change your bed linen (bed sheets, pillowcases and duvet covers) at the beginning and at the end of your treatment. Change your towel daily where possible. This is because skin cells are shed continuously and collect in clothing, towels and bed linen. MRSA found on the skin remains on these cells when they are shed.

You can wash your bed linen and towel in your own washing machine or at a launderette, using as hot a wash cycle (40°C or over) as is compatible with the fabric. Tumble drying or ironing will also kill the bugs. You may need help from relatives to do this.

- **Clothing**

Change all your clothing, including pyjamas or nightdress daily. Put your clothes into the washing machine or wash bag before you take a bath or shower. Wash all clothing in as hot a wash (40°C or over) as is compatible with the fabric. Tumble drying or ironing will also kill MRSA.

### **What about my family and friends?**

While MRSA can be passed from person to person it is not a real problem in the home or for work colleagues who are healthy and not needing hospital treatment. You can take part in all social activities and contacts, including sex and sharing a bed.

### **Are there any side effects of treating MRSA?**

The treatment has few side effects and these are mild. If you develop a rash stop the treatment and ask your nurse or doctor for advice. The treatment products are unlikely to cause any problem with eczema. However, you may need to use another agent if eczema becomes sore, as it is important that you complete the programme prior to surgery.

### **Further Information**

You can find out more about MRSA or the use of the antiseptic pack by:

- Asking the pre-assessment nurse
- Asking your GP or practice nurse
- Using the NHS choices website [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)
- Asking your hospital doctor or nurse
- Contacting the Infection Control Team at St. George's Hospital on 020 8725 2459

## MRSA Reduction (Decolonisation) Protocol - Daily Checklist.

**FOR OUT-PATIENT USE ONLY – use prescription chart for in-patients**

**Tick the boxes as you complete the treatment. Please bring this sheet with you when you come into hospital for surgery. Give this sheet to the nurse to be filed in your medical records.**

		Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5	Your surgery should take place at this time.  <i><b>*If you are using Naseptin® continue for a <u>further five days</u> after surgery.</b></i>
Apply inside the <b>nose</b> : mupirocin <b>or</b> Prontoderm® <b>or</b> Naseptin® * (see note)	<b>8am</b>						
	<b>12 noon</b>						
	<b>5pm (NOT this dose if using mupirocin)</b>						
	<b>8pm</b>						
Wash <b>skin</b> with antiseptic: chlorhexidine <b>or</b> Octenisan®							
Wash <b>hair</b> with antiseptic: chlorhexidine <b>or</b> Octenisan®							
Wash clothes							
Wash bed linen							

## Useful sources of information

Pharmacy Medicines Information Centre on 020 8725 1033 (Monday to Friday).

## Contact us

If you have any questions or concerns about your medicine(s) please contact:

Pharmacy Medicines Information Centre on 020 8725 1033 (Monday to Friday).

**For more information leaflets on conditions, procedures, treatments and services offered at our hospitals, please visit [www.stgeorges.nhs.uk](http://www.stgeorges.nhs.uk)**

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## Additional services

### Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

PALS can offer you advice and information when you have comments or concerns about our services or care. You can contact the PALS team on the advisory telephone line Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday from 2pm to 5pm.

A Walk-in service is available:

Monday, Tuesday and Thursday between 10am and 4pm

Friday between 10am and 2pm.

Please contact PALS in advance to check if there are any changes to opening times.

The Walk-in and Advisory telephone services are closed on Wednesdays.

PALS is based within the hospital in the ground floor main corridor between Grosvenor and Lanesborough Wing.

**Tel:** 020 8725 2453 **Email:** [pals@stgeorges.nhs.uk](mailto:pals@stgeorges.nhs.uk)

## NHS Choices

NHS Choices provides online information and guidance on all aspects of health and healthcare, to help you make decisions about your health. **Web:** [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)

## NHS 111

You can call 111 when you need medical help fast but it's not a 999 emergency. NHS 111 is available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Calls are free from landlines and mobile phones. **Tel:** 111

## AccessAble

You can download accessibility guides for all our services by searching 'St George's Hospital' on the AccessAble website ([www.accessable.co.uk](http://www.accessable.co.uk)). The guides are designed to ensure everyone – including those with accessibility needs – can access our hospital and community sites with confidence.



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